

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 09996 050952Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
FRB-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-11 TRSE-00 XMB-02
OPIC-03 SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 AGRE-00 NSC-05
SS-15 STR-07 CEA-01 OES-07 /111 W
-----120391 050959Z /23

P R 050910Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2641
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
USMISSION GENEVA

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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: ASEAN
SUBJECT: US/ASEAN DIALOGUE

REF: BANGKOK 9759, STATE 082203 , STATE 078402, GENEVA 4708,
MANILA 5218

1. EMBASSY CONVEYED AIDE MEMOIRE ON DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION ON
APRIL 4, TO THEP THEWAKUL, SECRETARY GENERAL FOR ASEAN AFFAIRS
(REF B) AND TOOK OCCASION TO FOLLOW UP ON US/ASEAN MINISTERIAL
MEETING (REF A). AT SAME TIME, WE LEFT PAPERS ON GATT CONSIDER-
ATION OF ASEAN PREFERENTIAL TRADING ARRANGEMENT AND THE US INDICA-
TIVE LIST OF TRADE INTERESTS IN THAILAND DRAWN FROM REFS C AND
D. THEP APPRECIATED US SUGGESTION REGARDING GATT/ASEAN PTA AND
PROMISED TO STUDY PROPOSAL WITH THE MFA ECONOMIC DEPARTMENT AND
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE. HOWEVER, AS THE ONLY NON-GATT MEMBER OF
ASEAN, THE RTG WILL PROBABLY GO ALONG WITH VIEWS OF THEIR PART-
NERS. HE REITERATED RTG PARTICIPATION AT SINGAPORE SENIOR TRADE
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PAGE 02 BANGKO 09996 050952Z

OFFICIALS MEETING APRIL 19-22 AND THAT THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO
DISCUSS INDICATIVE LIST.

2 . THEP WAS IN GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH PROPOSED SCHEDULE
LEADING TO FIRST JOINT WORKING GROUP MEETING WITH US (PARA 3
REF E), BUT ANTICIPATED ASEAN EXPERTS MEETING COULD NOT COMMENCE
BEFORE 20 MAY OWING TO LONG STANDING COMMITMENT FOR AN ASEAN/EEC

MEETING SCHEDULED IN BANGKOK 17-19 MAY. HE SAW NO PROBLEM FROM RTG VIEWPOINT WITH THE PRELIMINARY MEETINGS NOR WITH THE 24 JULY MINISTERIAL IN WASHINGTON ALTHOUGH HE REPEATED THAT INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA HAD STILL NOT RESPONDED TO TIME FRAME PER REF A.

3. THEP EXPRESSED INTEREST IN AIDE MEMOIRE RELATED TO THE EARLIER US DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION MEMORANDUM BUT DID NOT COMMENT ON THE SUBSTANCE. HE SAID THESE PROPOSALS WOULD BE GIVEN FULL CONSIDERATION AT THE ASEAN STANDING COMMITTEE NOW SCHEDULED FOR 20 APRIL IN BANGKOK. COMMENT: IN THIS CONNECTION, IT WOULD BE TIMELY IF OUR RESPONSE TO THE ELEVEN MEMORANDA COULD BE DELIVERED FOR STANDING COMMITTEE STUDY BY THAT DATE. END COMMENT. THEP REFERRED TO THE ELEVEN MEMORANDA BUT COMMENTED THE THAI DID NOT WISH TO PRESS THE US WITH REGARD TO THESE SINCE THERE WAS AMPLE SCOPE FOR COOPERATION IN MANY FIELDS AND COULD BE SIFTED BETWEEN NOW AND THE MINISTERIAL MEETING.

4. COMMENTING ON THE MINISTERIAL MEETING, THEP SAID HE WAS PROMOTING MORE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ASEAN AMBASSADORS IN WASHINGTON. HE FELT THEY COULD DO CONSIDERABLE SPADE WORK IN CLOSE COOPERATION WITH THE US GOVERNMENT IN SELECTING TOPICS FOR THE AGENDA AND IN STUDYING PROJECTS WITH US EXPERTS TO DETERMINE THOSE SUITABLE FOR MINISTERIAL CONSIDERATION, FIXING PRIORITIES AND DELETING THE LEAST PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS. HE BELIEVED THAT MUCH OF THIS COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED AT THE WASHINGTON END AND THE THAI WOULD EMPHASIZE THIS COULD SPPEED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 BANGKO 09996 050952Z

UP NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE US DURING THE FORTHCOMING STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING.

5. THEP DEPLORED THE EXISTING ASEAN SECRETARIAT ARRANGEMENTS AND DECLARED THEM USELESS AS A COORDINATING MECHANISM LEAVING ALL THE WORK TO THE INDIVIDUAL CAPITALS TO COMMUNICATE AMONGST THEMSELVES WHICH PROVED A CUMBERSOME PROCESS. THE SECRETARIAT SHOULD BE RUN BY SKILLED TECHNOCRATS WITH MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY. THEY SHOULD COORDINATE ALL THE MEETINGS AND EXPEDITE THE DOCUMENTATION. THE THAI WERE PREPARED TO PUT THE SECRETARIAT ON A SOUND OPERATING BASIS, IF OTHERS WOULD AGREE, AND EVEN CONTRIBUTE THREE OR FOUR PEOPLE WHICH IN THE LONG RUN MIGHT SAVE MONEY IN VIEW OF THE CURRENT UNWIELDY AND EXPENSIVE ARRANGEMENT. IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT HE FELT THE SECRETARIAT WOULD FUNCTION MORE SMOOTHLY AND AT LESS COST IF IT WERE HOUSED IN BANGKOK.

6. IN CONCLUSION, THEP ECHOED HIS HOPE THAT THE SECOND US/ASEAN MEETING WOULD PROVE CONSTRUCTIVE.
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